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PREFACE.

If some shadow of regret is caused by the reflection that another year has passed away since the Editor indited a Preface to 'The Zoologist,' there is at least this consolation to be found that the year has not been spent idly. Many workers have been busy in the field of Zoology, and the result of their labours and investigations has been generously communicated to this Journal to afford pleasure and instruction to others. Indeed on glancing over the Index to the annual volume, the Editor feels that he has good cause to be grateful to the many correspondents who have favoured him with communications during the past year. In almost every branch of Zoology some contribution to knowledge has been made.

In the case of MAMMALS, Mr. A. H. Cocks has given an interesting account of the result of his enquiries in Norway concerning the survival of the Beaver in that country, an account rendered all the more valuable from the regrettable fact that the extinction of this animal in Europe cannot be very far distant. The same contributor's remarks on the question of the specific identity of the Ferret and Polecat will be acceptable to those still sceptical on the subject.

There is still much to be learnt concerning the distribution of the smaller British mammals, and such items of intelligence as those communicated by Mr. D'Urban on the Red Field Vole in Devonshire (p. 487), Mr. Rope on the Harvest Mouse in Suffolk (p. 57), and Messrs. Chichester Hart, Cordeaux, and Parker on the occurrence of the Pine Marten in their respective districts are always welcome.

Comparatively few observers are so situated as to have opportunities of studying the Marine Mammalia, and hence such observations as those on the Great Grey Seal by Mr. Warren (p. 358) and on the White-beaked Dolphin by Mr. Southwell (p. 220) are the more acceptable.

As regards BIRDS, numerous interesting communications have been received during the past year, amongst which some half-dozen especially deserve mention, namely, the Report on Migration by Messrs. Harvie Brown and Cordeaux (pp. 161—204), Mr. Howard Saunders' account of the habits of the Skuas as observed in Shetland (p. 1), Mr. Chichester Hart's Notes on the Ornithology of the British Polar Expedition, 1875-6 (pp. 121, 204), Mr. Seeböhm's papers on the habits of the Marsh Warbler (p. 377), and nesting of the Spoonbills (p. 457). The occurrence of the Needle-tailed Swift for the second time in England, of which so pleasing an account (with a figure of the bird) has been given by Mr. Corbin (p. 81), is too remarkable to pass unnoticed, while many others might be mentioned which bear testimony to the careful attention which is being paid to Ornithology in various parts of the kingdom.

On REPTILES at least one communication has appeared (p. 408); more would have been welcome.

On the subject of FISHES, Dr. Day has favoured us with several interesting and valuable papers, such as those "On the Air-bladders of Fish" (p. 97), "On the Origin of Varieties in *Salmonidae*" (p. 133), and "The Fresh-water Fishes of India" (pp. 431, 461); while Messrs. D'Urban, Gatcombe, and Cornish have recorded the capture of several rare or little-known fishes on the sea-board of Devon and Cornwall. Mr. Carrington's position as Naturalist at the Westminster Aquarium has enabled him to supply some interesting notes at various times on rare British CRUSTACEA and RADIATA (as at p. 72); nor have the MOLLUSCA (pp. 222, 367) or the ANNELIDES (p. 409) been uncared for.

It is thus pleasant to find workers in so many branches of Zoology communicating so agreeably the results of their researches. From the increasing interest which is being manifested in the study of Natural History, the Editor is induced to hope that he may long continue to receive such interesting articles as those with which he has been favoured during the past year—articles which establish such pleasant relationship with the writers, and so agreeably lighten the task of editing.

J. E. H.

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EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

PLATE 1.

(FRONTISPIECE.)

THE NEEDLE-TAILED SWIFT, *Acanthyllis caudacuta*.

PLATE 2.

(To face page 273.)

THE PEREGRINE FALCON, *Falco peregrinus*, showing the arrangement of feathers on the upper and under sides of the wing.

Head of same.

Closed wing of same.

PLATE 3.

(To face page 289.)

THE GOSHAWK, *Astur palumbarius*, showing the arrangement of feathers on the upper and under sides of the wing.

Closed wing of same.

Foot of same.

